

Appendix F

Family Handbook Template

This template is a general guide for the information you may want to consider for inclusion in your family handbook. Your handbook should contain the policies you wish to highlight with your parents. This template is not all-inclusive but was intended as a place to begin as you identify the relevant topics to include. Content will need to be modified to reflect your program.

[Name of Business]

Welcome

Dear Family,

Welcome to [Name of Business] Family Child Care Home!

I am honored that you have taken the time to visit my child care home and learn more about the care and education program I provide for children in my care. My mission is to provide a caring and nurturing environment that will promote each child's growth and development and provide them with the life skills to be successful in school and throughout their lives.

I have been a licensed family child care provider for the past [number] years. [Add in additional background information as desired. Information could include previous work experience, enrollment in and/or rating in your state's quality rating and improvement system, information if you are accredited by the National Association of Family Child Care, relevant educational degree in early childhood education or related field, and/or special certifications (CDA, CPR, and first aid).]

On those occasions when I am unavailable to care for your child, I am assisted by [Name]. [Provide information about your substitute. Information might include previous work experience, education, and/or early childhood certifications (CDA, CPR, and first aid).] [Name] has been my substitute for [number] years and provides care when I am ill, have an appointment, or am on vacation.

I currently provide care for children six weeks of age to kindergarten. I will also accept children with mild disabilities. I am authorized to accept child care subsidy. I will provide snacks, breakfast, and lunch for your child and am enrolled in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

This handbook is designed to orient you to the guidelines and policies of my program. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any further questions.

Thank you for considering my program for your child. I look forward to the opportunity to provide your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Owner/Provider Name

Phone

Email

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[Name of Business]

Family Handbook

Philosophy

Through warm, supportive interactions and a safe, stimulating play environment, I will provide children with the opportunities needed to develop the cognitive, language, social-emotional, and motor skills necessary for success in school and beyond.

Operations

Hours of Operation

I am open Monday through Friday from [time] a.m. to [time] p.m.

With advance notice and if I am available, I am willing to provide evening and/or weekend care.

Emergency Substitute Provider

In the case of an emergency situation, illness, or due to an appointment that cannot be scheduled outside of the hours of care, I will call my substitute, [Name], to provide care. [Name] is familiar with my center and the care routines I use. When you enroll, you and your child will meet [Name]. There is a confidential notebook that is shared between [Name] and myself that has information on each child in care, including those with special health service plans. The notebook will also contain information regarding how to contact each child's parents and to whom they can be released.

Holidays and Vacation

I am closed for the following holidays:

- [List].

I will also close for two weeks of vacation during the summer. I will provide you a month's notice of the specific dates.

Families are responsible for finding back-up care for their children during holidays, provider vacations, and planned or unplanned closings unless [Name of substitute] is available.

Enrollment

Confidentiality

Unless I receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released to anyone else unless required by regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning your child and family will be kept confidential.

Forms and Fees

All enrollment forms and immunization and physical medical records must be completed prior to your child's first day of attendance. In addition, the following fees must be paid:

- Enrollment Fee: \$25 (non-refundable). This fee will be paid for through the child care subsidy program for eligible families.

- **Tuition Deposit - \$\$\$ [recommended amount is equal to approximately two weeks of care].** This deposit will be applied to the last two weeks of care and does not apply to tuition paid for through the child care subsidy program.

Withdrawals

I require a written, two-week notice, prior to a child being withdrawn. Failure of private pay families to provide me with notification will result in forfeiture of your two-week deposit.

Tuition and Fees

Full weekly payment is due on Monday (or the following day if a holiday). Credit is not given for holidays or child absences. Families can pay by cash, check, money order, or automatic electronic funds transfer.

Tuition rates are as follows:

Age of Child	Full-Time (Four-Five Days a Week for More Than Three Hours a Day)	Part-Time (Three or Less Days a Week or Less Than Three Hours Each Day)
Infant (0-18 Months)	[Fee]	[Fee]
Toddler (18-36 Months)	[Fee]	[Fee]
Preschool-Aged Child (36-60 Months)	[Fee]	[Fee]
School-Aged Child (5-8 Years)	[Fee]	[Fee]

No credits are given for child absences, holidays, closure to attend required training, or closure due to inclement weather.

A late pick-up is not a normal program option and must be preapproved. A late pick-up without 24 hour notice will be charged \$5 for every 15-minute interval. Repeated late pick-ups may result in child care services being terminated.

Additional fees for after-hours evening and/or week-end care will be negotiated.

Late payments can pose serious problems for my cash flow. A late payment fee of \$25 will be charged if fees are not received in the week in which care is provided. Repeated late payments may result in your child care services being terminated.

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$25. Two or more incidents will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

From time-to-time, there may be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. You will be notified of this fee prior to the scheduled event.

Inclusion

I will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of children with disabilities in my program based on their individual capabilities and needs. If your child has an identified special need, please provide me with updated information regarding his/her diagnosis and a copy of his/her most recent IFSP/IEP.

Attendance

Absence

Please notify me an hour before your regular arrival time if your child is going to be absent for the day or arrive after 9:00 a.m.

Provider Vacation

My personal vacations consist of two full weeks a year. You will be notified four weeks in advance of these dates. No tuition payments are due during these two weeks unless a substitute is provided.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., loss of power, loss of water) prevent me from opening on time or at all, I will notify you through text messaging by 6:00 a.m.

If it becomes necessary to close early, I will contact you by phone or text messaging to have you or another designated individual pick up your child as soon as possible.

General Procedure

Families are expected to walk their children into my home and sign them in each morning. Similarly, families are asked to pick up their children from inside my home and sign them out each day.

Drop-off and pick-up provide me with an opportunity to communicate with you about your child. Please do not use cell phones while dropping off or picking up your child.

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. You will be asked to update your Release Contacts every six months. Your child will not be released without your prior written authorization. Please notify anyone picking up your child that they will need to show a picture ID to verify their identity, if I have not previously met them.

If your child has not been picked up by closing time (**time p.m.**) and I have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. I will stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 90 minutes I have been unable to reach you or your contacts, I will have to call the local law enforcement.

What to Bring

Families may bring these items each day or leave them at my center and I will notify you when additional diapers or formula (if different than the one I provide) are needed:

- **Infants:** Bottles, pacifier, seven to eight diapers for a day's use, and at least two changes of clothes.
- **Toddlers:** Bottles (if applicable), five to six diapers, and at least two changes of clothes.
- **Older Toddlers:** Four to five pullups or diapers as needed during toilet training and one change of clothes.
- **Preschoolers:** At least one change of clothes.
- **Kindergarteners:** At least one change of clothes.
- **After-School Care Children:** Books for homework.

All children may bring a favorite blanket to use at naptime each day. Items brought from home will need to be labeled with your child's name using a permanent marker to ensure items are used only by your

child. Children’s blankets should be taken home at the end of each week to be laundered and then returned on Monday. Clothing that becomes soiled during the day will be put in a plastic bag and placed in your child’s cubby to be taken home for laundering.

Cubbies

Each child will be assigned a “cubby.” Children may place their coats, backpacks, and blankets in their cubbies. Please check your child’s cubby each day for items (soiled clothing, daily notes, notices about upcoming activities and/or closings) that need to be taken home.

Toys from Home

Please discourage your child from bringing toys or special items from home. This will reduce the likelihood of other children wanting to play with your child’s toy or your child’s toy being damaged or lost. If your child brings an item from home, it will need to be stored in their cubby during the day.

Communication and Family Partnership

Daily Communications

To keep you informed about your child’s activities and experiences in my program, I will communicate with you daily.

Bulletin Boards

I will use the bulletin board located in the entryway with program news, upcoming events, reminders about closings, announcements, etc.

Email

I will use email to regularly send out announcements, notices of community events, newsletters, and activities you can do with your children in your home.

Family Activities

I welcome family members in supporting your child’s growth and learning in my program. Families are encouraged to participate in the following ways:

- [List of activities family members can participate in].

Learning Environment

Curriculum

I implement the [Name] curriculum. This curriculum is developmentally appropriate to the specific ages of the children in my care and provides suggestions and activities to promote the development of children’s cognitive, language, social-emotional, and motor skills. Children learn to play and work together on projects. Learning occurs during hands-on explorations and exposure to different interest areas.

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, I attempt to spend at least one hour a day outside with the children. We will not go outdoors if the temperature is less than [number] degrees, more than [number] degrees, or if the air

quality fails to meet the minimum requirements. Please dress your child in clothing that allows for freedom of movement, participation in messy play, and is appropriate for going outdoors to play.

Outings and Field Trips

The children and I will go on regular walks around the neighborhood. Children will walk or ride in a stroller or buggy with proper restraints.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips to nearby parks, museums, and/or local businesses. You are encouraged to join your child on these outings. There may be a small fee for these activities as required by the setting. You will be asked to sign a permission statement and/or pay the necessary fee before all field trips.

Television Time

Television is not a part of our normal daily routine; however, I may on occasion record a television show as a teaching aid. If so, children over the age of two years will be allowed to watch television for up to 30 minutes a day. Programs watched will provide high-quality educational material.

Electronic Media

Screen time will not be made available to children under three years of age. Children three years of age or older will be able to engage with electronic media for up to one hour per day with a peer or another adult. Internet sites and software will be chosen to promote high-quality educational content.

Holiday and Cultural Celebrations

I will celebrate the following holidays/cultural celebrations:

- [List].

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs in separate cribs.

After lunch, all children older than one year, are provided a mat/cot on which to nap. Older children are asked to rest but are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities instead.

Toilet Training

I will work with you to ensure the toilet training experience is positive for your child. Typically, around 24 months, children will begin to show signs of physical control or an awareness of their bodily functions. As children demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process, I will work with you to identify a plan that we both can use so that your child is provided with a consistent routine between our homes.

Challenging Behaviors

Children will be taught to be kind and respectful, and to understand how their actions make others feel. I will help children with challenging behaviors by showing them how to solve problems using appropriate words and interactions. I will alert you if your child's behaviors become of concern. I will also work with you to better understand and be able to support your child's individual needs and challenges.

Nutrition

Food Brought from Home

I do not allow food to be brought in from outside my home. Many children have food allergies or are not allowed to eat certain foods. If your child will be arriving after a meal is served, please notify me and I will save the meal for them to eat upon their arrival.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, please notify me in writing so that I can make appropriate food substitutions. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy will need an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician that details your child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. Before your child's first day of care, there must be an agreed-upon plan to ensure your child's safety and health. The written plan should also list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated annually or more often as needed.

Meal Time

The children and I will engage in family-style meals where children are taught to serve themselves. Child-size tableware, serving bowls, and pitchers will be used to serve the food. During mealtime, children will be encouraged to use good manners and engage in conversations with one another. Weekly menus will be posted for your review on the family bulletin board located in the front entrance.

Infant Feedings

- I will hold Infants when bottle-feeding.
- I will feed infants "on cue" to the extent possible (at least every four hours and usually not more than hourly).
- I will hold infants while spoon feeding them until they are able to sit up. Once they can sit up, they will be placed in a chair with safety restraints while being spoon-fed, finger feeding, or as they begin to master the use of a spoon.
 - Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit.
 - All bottles with breast milk must be clearly labeled with your child's name and the date the milk was expressed.
- Formula and/or baby food must be brought in a factory-sealed container in a ready-to-feed strength or powder or concentrate. **[If you are participating in the CACFP program, the caregiver is required to provide one formula and any food needed.]**
- I will introduce solid foods based on guidance from each child's family.

Toddler and Preschool Feedings

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children will be encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Candy, sugary foods, and high-fat desserts will not be served.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children will not be served. These foods include hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, or thickly-spread peanut butter.

Health

Immunizations and Physicals

Up-to-date immunizations and well child checkups/physicals are required according to the current EPSDT schedule at the time of enrollment. Please keep your child's immunizations and well child checkups/physicals up to date and provide me with a copy of the results. I am required to keep current health, immunizations, and lead and hemoglobin tests up to date according to our state's EPSDT schedules. If you are not going to have your child receive recommended immunizations, you will need to complete a form required by state regulations.

Illness

To protect the other children in my care, I am unable to provide care for your child when they are sick. If your child begins to display any of the following signs of illness, you will be called and asked to pick up your child. Your child will be kept comfortable and will be isolated from the other children to the extent possible awaiting your arrival. Symptoms indicating illness include:

- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea: Stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting: Two or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Ringworm, until 24 hours after treatment, or unless completely covered.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (whooping cough), until five days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething).
- The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious.
- The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to my care is required.

Communicable Diseases

When a child in my program has a suspected communicable disease, I am required to notify the local Department of Public Health and all families of the children enrolled in my program. I will provide information about the disease to all families.

Injuries

My program is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

First aid will be administered by me in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive a report outlining the incident and course of action taken immediately.

In the event of a more serious, but non-life-threatening medical emergency, I will administer first aid and call you to ask you to transport your child to your child's medical provider or an emergency care center.

In the event of a medical emergency requiring immediate care, I will administer first aid to the extent possible and immediately call 911 for an ambulance. I will also contact you. I will make every attempt to escort your child to the hospital and remain with him/her until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Medications

As possible, please administer required medications at home. If a medication needs to be administered while your child is in my care, please turn the medication in to me and fill out the medication log, including the time(s) the medication is to be administered and the dosage.

- *Prescription medications* must be in their original container containing a label which includes your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the pharmacy.
- *Non-prescription medications* require a note signed by a physician specifying frequency and dosage.
- *Non-prescription topical ointments* (e.g., diaper cream, insect repellent, sunscreen) require a note signed by a family member specifying frequency and dosage to be administered.

Pets/Animals [If Appropriate]

Our family pet is [Name], a [type of pet]. He/she is well behaved around children and families and is up-to-date on current immunizations. He/she was considered healthy at her/his last annual checkup.

Smoking

My home is a non-smoking environment. The use of tobacco is not allowed on my property.

Prohibited Substances

Any adult who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave the premises immediately. Children will not be released to anyone who appears unable to safely care for them.

Dangerous Weapons

I do not allow guns, knives, or other dangerous weapons on my property.

Child Custody

I will consider both parents to have legal custody of a child unless I am provided with a court order stating otherwise.

Suspected Child Abuse

In compliance with state law, if I have reasonable cause to believe a child has been subjected to conditions or circumstances which have/would result in abuse or neglect, I am legally obligated to report this information to the local law enforcement or Child Protective Services agency.

Emergencies*Lost or Missing Child*

Should a child become lost or separated from me during an outing or field trip and is not immediately located, I will notify the family and if necessary the police.

Disaster Plan

I have a disaster plan for the following emergencies:

- Neighborhood alert.
- Thunderstorms and flooding.
- Tornados.
- Winter weather/snow/ice storms.
- Chemical spills/hazard material spills.
- Fire/wildfires.
- Earthquakes.

If I have to evacuate my home, I will take the children to a designated emergency shelter where arrangements have been made for the children and myself. My emergency shelter is [name of place, address, and phone number].

My home is fully equipped with smoke detectors in each room and a fire extinguisher in my kitchen. I also have a rolling evacuation crib or wagon which I can use to easily evacuate the children.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures I have set up for the safety and welfare of your child(ren) while in my care.

Please sign this acknowledgement regarding this handbook, detach it from the handbook, and return it to me prior to your child's start date.

I have received and reviewed the **Family Handbook**. I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask questions if I do not understand any policies, procedures, or information contained in this guidance.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Provider Signature: _____ Date: _____